

The Daily Edition

50¢

Serving Loudon, Monroe and Surrounding Counties

Friday, May 1, 2020

Economic Recovery Group Releases Reopening Guidance for Gyms

Tennessee's Economic Recovery Group announced guidance for gyms and exercise facilities on how to reopen safely. Gyms will be allowed to reopen in 89 of the state's 95 counties beginning Friday, May 1. The counties excluded are those with locally-run health departments: Shelby, Madison, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Sullivan.

"Exercise is incredibly important for the physical and mental health

of our population, and we want Tennesseans to have access to safe environments where they can exercise as appropriate," said Tennessee Governor Bill Lee. "These guidelines outline best practices in keeping with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and health experts for gyms to reopen in a way that will keep their employees and customers safe."

In addition to strict

adherence to CDC guidelines, the State recommends gyms, fitness/exercise facilities, or substantially similar facilities and activities put into place an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees. The full guidelines are posted online here and include:

Business Process Adaptations

• Restrict facility access to staffed hours only (i.e., any unmanned

see Gyms pg. 2

Join the Big Honk Today!



Join us to thank the staff at the Knox County Health Department for their hard work and commitment to our

community on Friday, May 1 at 1:30 p.m. Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs and Con-

see Honk pg. 3

Questionable Activity Surrounds Decatur County General Hospital Investigation Describes Practices by Independent Management Companies

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office has released an investigation revealing numerous questionable activities by two independent companies that were hired to manage the day-to-day operations of the Decatur County General Hospital in Parsons.

From March 1, 2018 through September 24, 2018, the hospital was managed by Impeli Health, Inc. (Impeli). The hospital was then managed by Progressive

Hospital Group, Inc. (Progressive) from January 21, 2019 through February 29, 2020.

In 2018, Impeli's Chief Executive Officer directed a hospital employee to transfer more than \$307,000 of money that belonged to the University of Tennessee (UT) to the hospital's account. The UT money had been intended to pay rent at a UT facility in Parsons; however, banking information

see Hospital pg. 3

Child Predator Jailed for Life

The FBI Pursues Child Sexual Abuse Offenders with Tenacity

When FBI Indianapolis Special Agent Ryan Barrett was the newest member of the field office's Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force, a more seasoned agent wanted to show him what they were up against.

"We had a program that tracked the use of a file-sharing program popular with people trading images of child sex abuse," Barrett said. "The agent asked the database

to show a dot for every user in the state of Indiana. The whole map lit up red."

Barrett stressed that those results are not unique to Indiana—any populated area in the United States and many other countries would show some number of people viewing and trading this content.

"I could be working

these cases 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year," Barrett said.

Though the scale is daunting, it doesn't stop task forces supported by the FBI from trying to put an end to child exploitation. "No one is going to rest until kids are safe," Barrett said.

Every case matters, but after 11 years on the

See Predator P.3



Verse of the Day

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every

form of malice.

—Ephesians 4:30-31

Wazzup

We at the Daily Edition want to thank all our circulators, readers and advertisers during the time we were unable

to publish on a regular basis. Hopefully this is a new beginning for us all. Thanks for all your continued support.

Weather

Today: Sunny. High of 70F. Tonight: Clear. Low of

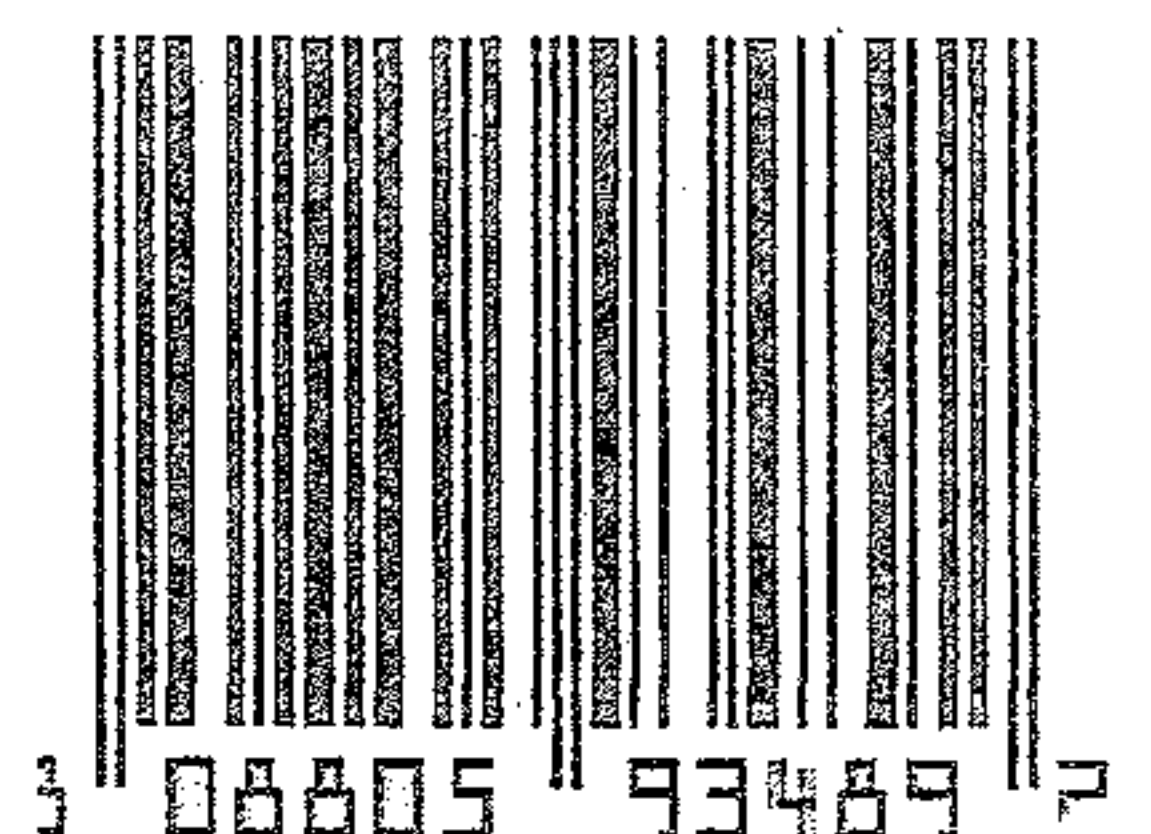
46F

Saturday: Sunny. High of 78F.

Saturday night: Clear. Low of 46F.

Sunday: Sunny. High of 84F.

Sunday night: clear. Low of 56F.



Gyms

facilities must be manned) and limit facility occupancy to 50 percent of capacity as dictated by fire code (as such capacity is adjusted in consideration of closed areas of the facility pursuant to these guidelines)

- Mitigate exposure in the workplace by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify the scheduling

- Staff to conduct regular (i.e., every 2 hours) disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, equipment and common areas of the facility using disinfectant cleaning supplies according to CDC guidelines

- Close showers, locker rooms, and lockers until further notice. Ask customers to instead use small gym bags to store personal belongings; remind customers to appropriately monitor or secure such personal belongs or provide a secure area monitored by staff

- Close all swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas and other recreational water or spa facilities

- Close all basketball courts, racquetball courts, and other places where formal and informal group or team sports may occur

- Any youth or adult team leagues or sports should remain closed

- Only allow group fitness classes if classes can be completed in accordance with social distancing recommendations (including but not limited to: less than 50% capacity and with more than 6 feet of distance maintained between participants at all times; no shared equipment during the class; sufficiently adjusted class schedules to allow for deep cleaning between classes; martial arts and other contact activities should be completed without any person-to-person contact)

- Encourage all employees and customers to wear PPE where applicable, and recommend that customers wear a face covering (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers)

- Adjust equipment layout and close or restrict access to equipment to maintain at least six feet of distance between equipment

- Temporarily close water fountains, common areas,

break rooms, check-in counters, where customers or employees may congregate. Encourage users to provide their own water

- No self-service options (coffee bars, smoothie stations and other forms of communal food in facilities). Food retail should follow restaurant guidelines.

- Ensure that staffing of facilities is sufficient to enable enhanced sanitization and cleaning measures

Consumer Protection
 · Screen customers for illness upon entry to the gym:

Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer. Persons with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premise

Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms

Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?

Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?

Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?

- Keep doors and windows open where possible to improve ventilation

- Post signs encouraging social distancing (visible to customers)

- Require that customers wash or sanitize their hands upon entering and leaving the facility

- Require customers to clean equipment they come in contact with using disinfecting wipes before and after each use

- Encourage customers to use only one piece of equipment at a time (i.e., no circuits or "super setting") so that machines are cleaned after use

- Consider limiting workout length to avoid unnecessary exposure, decrease congestion, and allow for additional sanitization

- Recommend that persons more vulnerable or at-risk for COVID-19 as identified by the CDC—including those who are over the age of 65 or those who have chronic medical conditions—take extra precaution or refrain from use of the facility during Phase 1 of re-opening

Employee Protection

- Allow employees to work from home as much as possible;

- Screen all employees re-

porting to work for COVID-19 symptoms;

- Staff should wear face coverings (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC;

- Provide training on personal protective equipment based on CDC guidelines;

- Provide a sanitizing station such as a wash basin with soap


and/or bottle of hand sanitizer;

- Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible.

The Economic Recovery Group (ERG), composed of 30 leaders from the public and private sector, is crafting guidance to assist businesses in a safe reopening. The industry representatives participating in the ERG collectively represent over 140,000 Tennessee businesses that employ over 2.5M Tennesseans.

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Hospital

was mistakenly shared with the hospital. UT demanded repayment after it learned the money had been misdirected to the hospital. The funds were subsequently repaid to UT.

Investigators are also questioning \$130,488.52 in payments made by the hospital to Allergy Nexus, LLC and Dunwoody Labs, Inc. Impeli purportedly made these disbursements for hospital laboratory expenses. However, hospital lab employees could not confirm that lab specimens were ever processed at the hospital or referred to an outside lab by the hospital for processing.

The investigation lays out several red flags associated with Progressive's laboratory billing practices. It's important to know that Progressive and its owner/principal also have ownership interests in Progressive Medical Center and Dunwoody Labs in Georgia.

The Decatur County General Hospital used Dunwoody Labs for laboratory testing shortly after entering into the management agreement with Progressive. Soon, Decatur County started receiving specimens for lab testing from Progressive Medical Center in Georgia. Many of these tests were then referred to Dunwoody Labs.

Progressive and Dunwoody Labs had pre-arranged for Dunwoody Labs to submit health insurance reimbursement claims using Decatur County's billing identification. This made it appear that certain lab tests were performed at the hospital. Because the hospital is located in rural Tennessee, its insurance reimbursement is significantly higher than what would have been paid to Dunwoody Labs.

As a result of these, and other questionable activities surrounding lab testing, investigators are questioning \$275,000 in payments made by the hospital to Dunwoody Labs.

Additionally, Progressive authorized \$47,071.04 in hospital funds to be paid on behalf of a consultant hired by Progressive. Investigators were unable to obtain any justification that the consultant's work benefitted the hospital. Progressive also

used \$8,000 of hospital funds to pay bonuses to the hospital's former Chief Executive Officer (\$5,000) and former Chief Operations Officer (\$3,000).

Under Progressive's management, the hospital's debt increased from \$1,013,790 to approximately \$2,869,616. These liabilities represent money owed to the hospital's vendors, employees, the Internal Revenue Service, and other creditors.

In all, decisions by independent management companies and a lack of oversight by Decatur County officials have created liabilities, questionable payments, and funds at-risk totaling approximately \$6 million.

The Comptroller's Office has communicated the results of its investigation with the Office of the District Attorney General of the 24th Judicial District and the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Tennessee.

"The financial issues surrounding the Decatur County General Hospital have had a detrimental impact on the county's finances for several years," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "Last month, the County Commission voted to close the hospital. In keeping with that action, our Office has directed the county to cease spending on the hospital except for expenses necessary to close the hospital, pay liabilities, or negotiate the sale of the hospital."

To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at 800.232.5454, or file a report online at: www.comptroller.tn.gov/hotline. Follow us on twitter: @TNCOT

Predator

task force, Barrett knows to prioritize cases that will make the greatest impact. That means pursuing large trading networks and groups, going after the people who are producing the materials, and tracking online predators engaged in sextortion.

It is work that often requires patience and tenacity.

Several years ago, Barrett got a tip from a Ukrainian citizen

concerned about the activity of Charles Skaggs, Jr., an American who claimed to be running a non-profit for Ukrainian orphans. There wasn't much in the tip for the FBI to go on, but the name of Skaggs' organization raised immediate alarm.

The name of the so-called orphanage was the same as a widely circulated series of child abuse videos. "The fact that this guy names his orphanage after that—the second I saw it I was like, 'Oh no,'" Barrett recalls.

"I could be working these cases 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year."

Ryan Barrett, special agent, FBI Indianapolis

At the time, it was difficult for Ukrainian authorities to help the investigation because the country was consumed with a war. So Barrett asked for the support of Homeland Security Investigations and U.S. Customs and Border Protection in monitoring Skaggs' trips in and out of the country. It was then a matter of keeping tabs on Skaggs and waiting.

In December 2016, more than a year after the FBI received the tip, agents from Homeland Security Investigations and Customs and Border Protection stopped Skaggs for additional screening when he arrived at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport from Ukraine. When asked if he had additional cell phones, electronics, computers, hard drives, thumb drives, or any other computer equipment on him or in his luggage, Skaggs told agents he did not.

But in their search, the agents uncovered several thumb drives from his bag that were later found to contain child sexual

abuse images, including videos Skaggs had made of a child who often stayed in his Indiana home.

While he was in detention awaiting trial, Skaggs asked his son to retrieve a hard drive he had hidden in the ceiling of his apartment building's laundry room. That hard drive also contained images of child sexual abuse.

Skaggs was tried in July 2019 and convicted of nine counts of sexual exploitation of a minor, two counts of possession of child pornography, and one count of concealment of evidence. He was sentenced to life in prison on January 30, 2020.

Honk

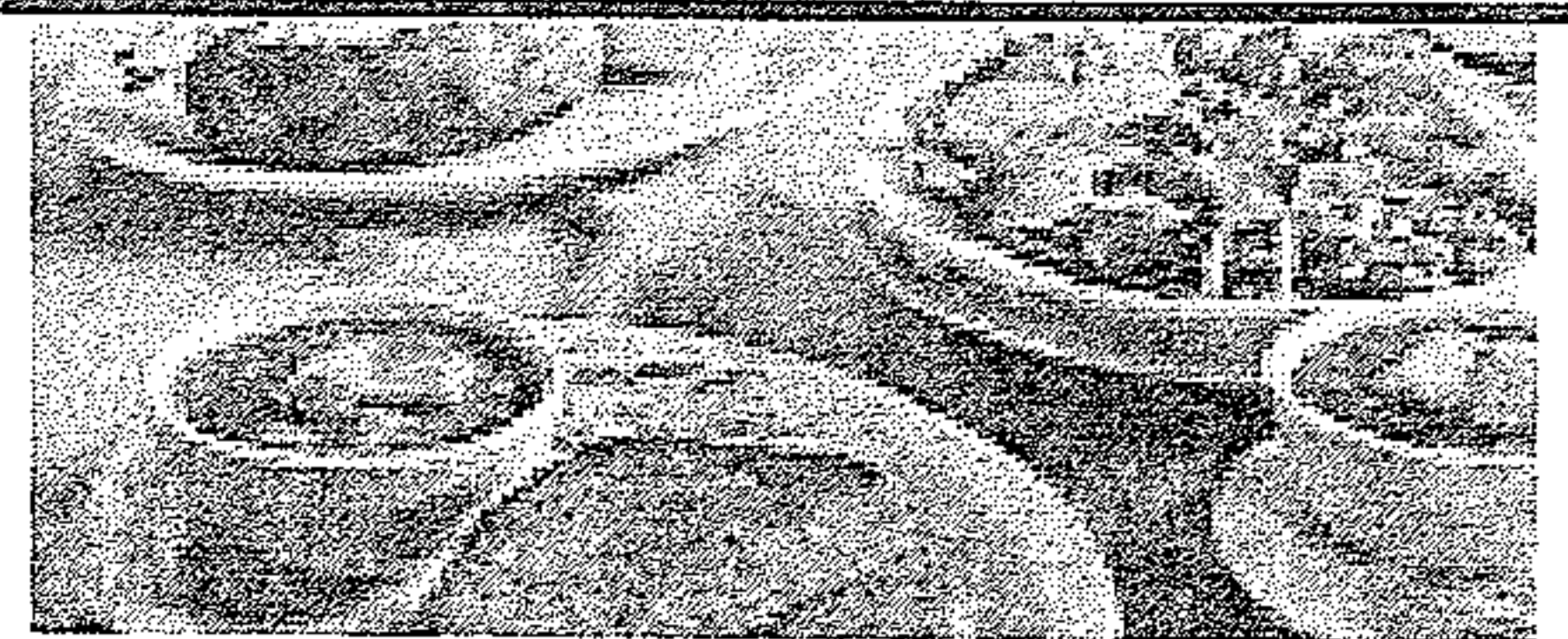
gressman Tim Burchett will lead The Big Honk along with Mayor Indya Kincannon. Sirens will sound their appreciation from the biggest trucks in Knox County.

The public is encouraged to line up in their cars at the corner of Lee Street and Dameron Avenue by 1:30 p.m. to parade around the Health Department three times with balloons, banners, signs and enthusiastic honks of gratitude.

Let the staff at our Health Department know how much we appreciate their efforts in keeping us safe.

The ROUTE: Lee Street to Dameron Avenue. Right on Central Street, Right on Bernard Avenue, Right on Wray Street, Right on Dameron Avenue - do it again!

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